

Lyreacrompane N.S. Covid 19 Return to School Plan



Website: www.lyreacrompanens.com



1. Introduction

As a school community we have successfully navigated our way through what has been the most challenging time in the history of modern Irish education. As we look forward in excitement to reopening our school on 28th August we need to be aware that there will be challenges ahead. Our school will operate under new norms. As a school community we will have to adapt quickly to new and revised practices and procedures many of which are detailed in this policy. The Health, Safety and Well-being of all members of our school community is of paramount importance to us all.

Procedures have been put in place in line with HSE and Department of Education and Skills advice and guidance and are subject to change as new advice or the changing needs of our school dictate. All members of the school community, irrespective of circumstance, are expected to adhere fully to the procedures put in place in an attempt to minimize the risk posed by Covid-19. It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all health and safety requirements.

It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that all members of the school community must adhere fully to the practices and procedures put in place to ensure all of our safety. Any instances of non-compliance will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management. Each and every individual must play their part.

We all have an obligation to do what we can to ensure the safety of our school community. Breaches of procedure by any individual will not be tolerated. Covid-19 poses a serious risk to us all.

2. Aim

Through the implementation of the practices and procedures as outlined in this policy our school community aims to:

- Do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID-19 into our school.
- Reduce the likelihood of the spread of Covid-19, insofar as possible, within our school if introduced.
- Detail for all members of our school community how our school will reopen for all students from the 28th of August and what the operation of our school will look like so as to be sustainable in a COVID-19 context.
- Balance the need for a practical and sensible level of caution with the need to provide a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

3. Covid-19 Policy Statement

Lyreacrompane National School is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff and a safe learning environment for all our pupils.

To ensure that, we have developed the following COVID-19 Response Plan. The BOM and all school staff are responsible for the implementation of this plan and a combined effort from all members of the school community will help contain the spread of the virus.

In Lyreacrompane National School we will:

- continue to monitor our COVID-19 response and amend this plan in consultation with our staff
- provide up to date information to our staff and pupils on the Public Health advice issued by the HSE and Gov.ie
- display information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and correct handwashing techniques
- agree with staff, a worker representative who is easily identifiable to carry out the role outlined in this plan
- inform all staff and pupils of essential hygiene and respiratory etiquette and physical distancing requirements
- adapt the school to facilitate physical distancing as appropriate in line with the guidance and direction of the Department of Education
- keep a contact log to help with contact tracing
- ensure staff engage with the induction / familiarisation briefing provided by the Department of Education
- implement the agreed procedures to be followed in the event of someone showing symptoms of COVID-19 while at school
- provide instructions for staff and pupils to follow if they develop signs and symptoms of COVID-19 during school time
- implement cleaning in line with Department of Education advice All school staff will be consulted on an ongoing basis and feedback is encouraged on any concerns, issues or suggestions.

This can be done through the Lead Worker Representative, Martina Culloty, who will be supported in line with the agreement between the Department and education partners.

The Deputy Lead Worker Representative is Kieran Quirke.

Signed: Eilish Lyons

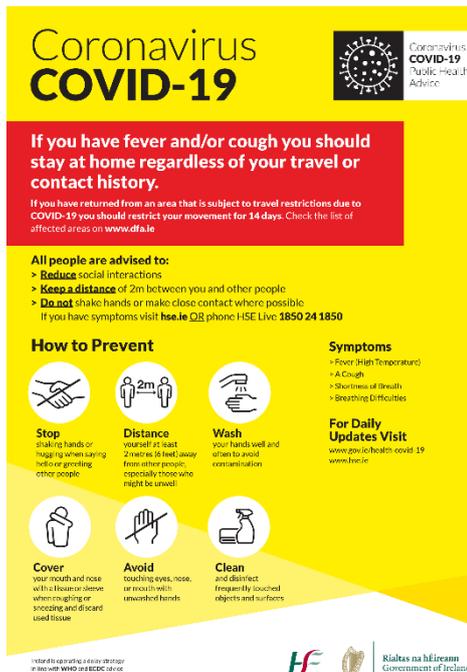
Date: 19/08/2020

4. Know the symptoms of Covid-19

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 it is important to know and recognise the symptoms.

They are:

- High temperature
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste



5. Minimising the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into our school

As a school community we must do everything practical to avoid the introduction of COVID19 into our school. If infection is not introduced it cannot be spread. The risk of spreading the infection once introduced exists in all interpersonal interactions; student-student, teacher-teacher and teacher-student and must be managed in all settings.

A range of essential control measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of the spread of the Covid-19 virus and to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, pupils, parents and visitors, as far as possible, within the school environment. These control measures shall continue to be reviewed and updated as required on an ongoing basis.

It is critical that staff, pupils, parents and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the control measures outlined and that they fully cooperate with all procedures and health and safety requirements.

Practices and procedures

5.1 Promoting awareness:

- All members of our school community will actively promote awareness of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Signage informing members of the school community of the symptoms of Covid-19 and the need for social distancing are displayed at all access points to school grounds.
- All members of the school community will embed in pupils the need for appropriate respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene.
- Parents, pupils and staff will adhere to all procedures.

5.2 Attendance at school:

- Members of the school community who display symptoms of Covid-19 **MUST NOT ATTEND or VISIT OUR SCHOOL** and should immediately phone their doctor and follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- Members of the school community **MUST NOT ATTEND OR VISIT OUR SCHOOL** if they have been identified by the HSE as a contact for person with COVID-19 and must follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- Staff and pupils that develop symptoms at school must promptly bring this fact to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal, as appropriate.
- Staff and pupils must know the protocol for managing a suspected case of COVID-19 in school as detailed in Section 8 of the DES Guidelines.
- Everyone entering the school building must perform hand hygiene using hand sanitiser provided at each entrance.
- If pupils are sick they **MUST NOT** present for school.

Visits to the school by all persons other than staff and pupils will be **by appointment only**. Appointments must be arranged in advance through the school office, by phone on 068 48233 or by e mail at lyreschool@gmail.com.

- Each visitor entering the school will be required to complete a Contract Tracing Log irrespective of the duration of the visit.
- Parents must drop and collect pupils from the designated entrances and not enter the school grounds.

The only exceptions to this are:

- In the case of Junior and Senior Infants, ONE parent/designated person can accompany pupils in these classes for assembly and dismissal. Parents/designated persons **MUST** practice physical distancing of 2m.
 - In the case of pupils with additional educational needs to an extent that the school advise the pupil be accompanied, ONE parent/designated person can accompany pupils in these instances for assembly and dismissal. Parents/designated persons **MUST** practice physical distancing of 2m.
-
- Physical distancing of 2m should be maintained between staff and all visitors to the school.
 - Physical distancing of 2m should be maintained between all adults when on school grounds.
 - Adults accompanying pupils to school as detailed above and visitors with prearranged appointment **MUST** wear suitable face coverings.

5.3 Respiratory Hygiene

All members of our school community **MUST** practise and actively promote good respiratory hygiene at home and at school as this will help protect people around us from viruses such as flu and Covid-19.

Good respiratory hygiene entails:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your bent elbow when you cough or sneeze.
- Disposing of the used tissue immediately and safely into a nearby bin.
- Bins will be emptied at regular intervals.

5.4 Hand Hygiene

All members of our school community **MUST practise and actively promote effective hand hygiene at home and at school.**

- Staff and pupils must understand why hand hygiene is important as well as when and how to wash their hands.
- Hand sanitisers are installed, with appropriate signage, at each entry point, in each classroom and at appropriate locations throughout the school.
- Posters are displayed at each hand washing station throughout the school showing effective hand washing technique.

- HSE guidelines on handwashing are available at:
<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>
- All persons entering the school building must perform hand hygiene using hand sanitiser provided. Hand hygiene can be achieved by hand washing or use of a hand sanitiser (when hands look clean).

Frequency of Hand Hygiene Pupils and staff MUST perform hand hygiene:

- On arrival at school;
- Before eating or drinking;
- After using the toilet;
- After playing outdoors;
- When their hands are physically dirty; □ When they cough or sneeze.

5.5 Physical Distancing

Maintaining physical distancing in the school environment is one of the key control measures to minimize the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

Physical distancing will be usefully applied in our school allowing for some flexibility when needed. It will be applied in a practical way that recognises that the learning environment cannot be dominated by a potentially counterproductive focus on this issue. Physical distancing in our school will look different across the various ages and stages of learning.

It is recognised that it is not always possible for staff to maintain physical distance from pupils and it is not appropriate that they would always be expected to do so where this could have a detrimental impact on the pupil i.e. if a child sustains an injury and requires first aid.

However, where possible staff should maintain a minimum of 1m distance and where possible 2m. They should also take measures to avoid close contact at face to face level such as remaining standing rather than sitting beside/crouching down. Staff will wear suitable face coverings while at work.

All adult visitors to the school, as scheduled by appointment, MUST maintain a 2m distance from school staff and wear suitable face coverings.

Our school community is committed to the two principles of physical distancing, namely, increasing separation and decreasing interaction, as a means of minimising the risk of the introduction of Covid19 to our school.

5.5.1 A - Increasing Separation

In order to minimise contact between pupils, insofar as possible, the school will operate based on two bubbles (Mr Quirke's room (Juniors – 3rd) Mrs Lyons room (4th – 6th) for arrival, dismissal, movement through the school and break times. In so far as possible these two bubbles will not interact.

- The bathroom cubicles and sinks are colour coded according to their bubble to minimise shared use of bathroom facilities.
- Each bubble will play in a different section of the yard and equipment between bubbles will not be shared.
- On arrival and dismissal pupils will maintain two metre distance. Markers will be placed outside the front door to ensure pupils do not enter the school in groups. A staff member will be at the door to facilitate the smooth entry and dismissal from school.

Parental responsibilities on assembly/dismissal:

- Parents must arrive on time for dropping off and collecting their child.
- Only parents or carers who are well and have no symptoms of COVID-19 or who have served the required quarantine time of 14 days where advised are allowed to drop off and collect children.
- Any parent who is in a high risk category should not drop off or collect children in order to protect themselves.
- Parents must not congregate in groups.
- Parents who are permitted on school grounds (Infants and pupils with additional needs) must ensure their child remains at their side at all times and that their child does not interact with other children.
- Parents who are permitted on school grounds (Infants and pupils with additional needs) must wear suitable face coverings
- A drop and go/collect and go policy will be in place. Under no circumstances are parents to congregate on or outside school grounds.

- At arrival and departure times of children, social distancing is to be maintained by children and parents.

5.5.1 B Decreasing interaction

Due to the layout of and available space in our school we are fortunate to be in a position to decrease, insofar as possible, interaction between pupils in different Bubbles. In doing this we will adopt a common-sense approach while recognising the limits to which this can be achieved between pupils. Separate play areas will be allocated to classes within each bubble.

6. A-Z of school practices and procedures

Books etc.

- Parents must ensure that all books/writing equipment are sanitised using alcohol wipes before being placed in the child's schoolbag.
- Parents must ensure that all of the child's equipment/books/copies are labelled with the child's name as equipment/books cannot and will not be shared.
- We are asking parents to ensure your child has a pencil case for home use and another one for school use. The pencil case used at home will not be brought to school and the pencil case used in school will not be brought home.
- For the start of the school year all books will remain in school.

Clothing

- Ensure your child can/teach your child to open/close their own coat and tie their own shoes. Shoes with Velcro should be used where pupils are unable to tie their own.

Face Coverings

- Staff members will wear face coverings, similar to those worn in shops or on public transport, when a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
- There is no requirement for pupils to wear face coverings.
- All adult visitors to school grounds **MUST WEAR** suitable face coverings.

Handshaking/Hugging

- While we will all be delighted to see each other again, hand shaking and hugging will not be allowed.

Home/School Communication

- For the start of the school year communication between home and school will take place electronically using e mail, text a parent, and phone

- Face to face meetings will only be used in exceptional circumstances and arranged in advance

Homework:

- Homework will not be assigned during the month of September and it will be reviewed after that. However, we would strongly encourage each pupil to read as extensively as possible during this time.

Hygiene and Cleaning

- Sanitiser dispensers have been installed throughout the school e.g. at the entry and exit door, in each classroom and staff room.
- Emulsifying soap is available in all toilets.
- Hand hygiene will be promoted and encouraged, and parents/guardians are asked to support the school in reinforcing this message.
- In accordance with the DES guidelines, the school will be thoroughly cleaned once per day.
- All staff will have access to cleaning products and will be required to maintain cleanliness of their own work area. Under no circumstances should these cleaning materials be removed from the building. Staff should thoroughly clean and disinfect their work area before and after use each day.
- Waste will be collected daily from offices and other areas within the school.
- Staff must use and clean their own equipment and utensils (cup, cutlery, plate etc.) **ICT**
- Devices must be cleaned after use and before they are returned for charging.

Inability to attend school due to Covid-19

- Pupils who are unable to attend school on medical grounds, due to Covid-19, must provide the school with a letter/report from their GP/Consultant stating that they cannot attend on health grounds.
- In the absence of medical certification of non-attendance the school is obliged by law to implement the terms of The Education Welfare Act as normal.

Lunches

- Parents must ensure that all lunch boxes/water bottles are sanitised using alcohol wipes before being placed in the child's schoolbag.
- Parents **MUST** ensure that pupils have sufficient lunch/drink coming to school each morning as we will not be in a position to accept and distribute lunches during the school day.
- Please remind your children not to share their food or drinks with other children.

- Please make sure your child is self-sufficient i.e. They can open/peel any lunch/drink you pack for them. Please pay particular attention to any drinks that require a straw.
- Please make sure they have enough drinks to last them throughout the day as we will not be in a position to refill drinks bottles.

Children will eat their lunches at their desks. No food will be allowed onto the yard.

- All leftovers/waste must be stored in each pupil's lunchbox and must be disposed of at home.

Photocopying.

- Any staff member who uses the photocopier must clean it down after use with the wipes provided.

Physical Education and P.E. Equipment

- Physical Education lessons will take place outside when the weather allows. Teachers will organise lessons that require very little if any equipment. Staff members and pupils will be encouraged to take additional breaks outside during the school day. While these breaks are taking place all windows in the classroom should be opened to allow for ventilation. All PE equipment if used must be sanitised after use.

Punctuality

- It is essential that parents/pupils arrive in time for school at 9 am

Returning from abroad

- Children who have travelled from countries not on the Green List must not attend school during the 14-day self-isolation period which commences on the date of return to Ireland.

Staffroom

- All staff members must maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when they are not engaged in teaching e.g. when they are using the staff room and arriving to work.
- Staff meetings for the most part will be held remotely or in small groups if deemed necessary
- Staff members should bring their own cups, bottles, cutlery, etc. to school and avoid sharing utensils in the staffroom as far as possible.

Substitute Teachers and SNAs

- The sequence for covering all teacher absences will be in accordance with DES circular 0045/2020. A copy of the Covid-19 Return to School Policy will be provided to each substitute teacher/SNA. Substitutes will be required to complete a Return to the Workplace

form before they enter a classroom and will be asked to confirm that they have engaged in the online Induction training.

Teaching and Learning

- As a school, we are very aware that the children have been away from school since March 12th. We appreciate the time and effort that went into Home Learning, and we recognise the challenges that Home Learning presented for all families.
- Each child will be in a different place in relation to his/her learning, and we wish to assure you that staff will take that into consideration when planning for Teaching and Learning during the 2020/2021 school year.
- The Department of Education and Skills has published Curriculum guidelines for schools, as we work with all the children during the return to school. Initially there will be a focus on Language, Numeracy, SPHE and PE. As advised by the National Educational Psychological Services we will need to “Slow down to catch up”.

Team Teaching/Special Education Teachers/Special Needs Assistants

- Staff members (particularly Support Teachers and SNAs) may rotate between areas/classes. When rotation occurs, agreed sanitising routines will be observed.
- In keeping with our Special Education policy, support will be provided by a blended approach of in-class support and withdrawal.
- Where a support teacher is working alongside a class teacher in a classroom, both teachers must be mindful of maintaining social distance from one another.
- The tables and chairs in SET rooms will be wiped clean by the SET in between different pupils or small groups attending

Uniforms

- There is no guidance or advice to say that school uniforms or tracksuits should be washed every day and this is not practical for most families. However children’s tracksuits must be clean and washed regularly as a child may have coughed or sneezed into their sleeve as per coughing protocols.
- As a school we strongly advise that children should wear their school tracksuits only for school related activities. Tracksuits should be taken off straight after the child arrives home from school for the day. They should not be worn in after-school facilities, shops, during after-school activities, etc.

Ventilation

- To ensure that classrooms are well ventilated, windows will be kept open as often as possible, and will be opened while children are taking breaks in the playground.

Visiting Teachers/Coaches

- The possibility of facilitating extra-curricular will eventually be explored. However, it is not recommended that children from different bubbles would participate in extra-curricular activities at the same time. For the foreseeable future all of these activities are suspended.

Wellbeing of the School Community

We will work on the recommended five principles to support the wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. These are promoting:

- A sense of safety
- A sense of calm
- A sense of belonging and connectedness to school
- A sense of self-efficacy and school-community efficacy
- A sense of hope

Our usual practice is to provide support to pupils based on the Continuum of Support. This is a tiered system that provides Whole School and Classroom Support for all pupils, additional School Support for some pupils, and School Support plus extra targeted intervention for a few pupils with complex needs.

- The Stay Safe programme will be taught in all classes at the start of the school year.
- Increased emphasis will be placed in all classes on SPHE / PE and outdoor activities.

8. Illness and Dealing with a Suspected Case of COVID-19

We love to see all of our children at school every day. However, under the current circumstances, if children are sick they must not be sent to school.

- Parents/guardians must keep children at home if they display any Covid-19 Symptoms.
<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/symptoms.html>
- Staff must not attend school if they display any symptoms.
- Mr Coughlan's room is the designated isolation area.
- If a staff member/pupil displays symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, the following procedure will be implemented:

- The pupil will be accompanied to the isolation area. A distance of 2 metres will be maintained. The person accompanying the child must wear a face covering.
- If a pupil has a suspected case, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately by telephone. Parents must make sure that their contact details are kept up to date at all times. If we are unable to contact a parent/guardian it will be considered a serious breach of Health and Safety.
- Staff members who are symptomatic should immediately inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and go to the isolation area.
- A face covering will be provided to the staff member/child who is symptomatic.
- The staff member or child who is symptomatic should avoid touching people, surfaces and objects.

- If the staff member/child is well enough to go home, arrangements will be made for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible.
- Anyone who is symptomatic is advised to inform their general practitioner by phone of their symptoms. Public transport of any kind should not be used to travel home.
- If the staff member/child is too unwell to go home or advice is required, the school will contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a Covid-19 suspect.
- The isolation area and work areas will be thoroughly cleaned in line with the guidelines.
- The HSE will inform any staff/parents who have come into close contact with a diagnosed case via the contact tracing process. The HSE will contact all relevant persons where a diagnosis of COVID-19 is made. The instructions of the HSE should be followed and staff and pupil confidentiality is essential at all times.
- It is important to remember that any of us can get sick or unwell, and if we do, we need understanding and support from those around us. It is essential that anyone who feels unwell makes that known to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

This policy was sanctioned by the Board of Management of Lyreacrompane National School on 26th August 2020